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### Normalization of Qur'ān in the Allegorical Story of the Lion and Cow in Mathnawi: With an Emphasis on Surah al-Ḥashr, Verse 21

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#### Abstract

People have different views about Qur'ān: some deny it, some believe it. The believers of Qur'ān are divided into two groups: the first group pays due attention to it and tries to use it to the best of their abilities. However, the second group constituting the majority of the Muslim community considers Qur'ān as a normal book and disregards its greatness and importance. Rumi tells the tragic story of these people in an artistic language, using beautiful allegory. Rumi considers a Muslim who does not pay due attention to Qur'ān like a peasant who goes to the stable every night and takes after his cow. One day, a lion attacks the stable, eats the cow, and sits in its place. In the midst of the darkness, little knowing about the story, the peasant rubs his hand on the limbs of the lion, back and side, now above, now below. Lion says to itself: "if the light were to become greater, He would not stroke me so rudely". Relating the story, Rumi presents his main speech and complains about the normalization of Qur'ān by Muslims on behalf of the Almighty God. To this end, Rumi refers to the Surah al-Ḥashr, verse 21, in which God says: "Had We sent down this Qur'ān upon a mountain, you would have surely seen it humbled [and] go to pieces with the fear of Allah". The present study attempted to investigate Rumi's allegory based Qur'ān and Hadith and library research. The findings show that Rumi believes that the main reason for the normalization of Qur'ān by Muslims is that it has become routine for them.

**Keywords:** *Normalization of Qur'ān; Allegory; Rumi; Mathnawi: The Lion and the Cow; The Surah Ḥashr; Verse 21*

#### 1. Introduction

Qur'ān is a wonderful work. This Heavenly book has amazed the free-thinkers due to its form- i.e., eloquence and rhetoric- and content- i.e., the inclusion of pure knowledge. If the narrator of Qur'ān is the God who describes Himself as "the best of creators!" (al-Mu'minūn: 14), Qur'ān must definitely be "the best of discourses" (al-Zumar: 23) and make its audiences amazed. This has made Qur'ān a unique artistic work. In fact, the Omniscient Creator has manifested the Creation (*Takwin*) System" and "Legislation (*Tashri*) System" of His beauty and glory. The Universe with its all vastness is the manifestation of the Divine beauty and glory. On the other hand, The Holy Qur'ān reflects the unique

attributes of the Creator. While the Universe with such signs as the sun, the moon, the night, the morning brightness, the thunder, the ant, the bee, the elephant, the spider, etc. is the manifestation of the Creator of the Universe, Qur'ān has also used these as the titles of its Surahs. Indeed, the names of the Surahs of Qur'ān are the Divine signs of God since everything in the world is the sign of God. The Almighty God has presented the manifestations of His names and attributes in Qur'ān and the created world.

On the one hand, the audience of Qur'ān is a man who inherently gets amazed by the wonderful things and raises questions about it: "is Qur'ān the word of man?" "what makes Qur'ān so amazing?" etc. The man raises questions not only about Qur'ān but also about the Universe and his own relationship with it. He asks such questions as: "Who am I? Where did I come from? Why am I here? Where will I go?" it is unlikely to find someone who has not asked himself these most fundamental questions.

People react in two different ways to these questions: the first group nips them in the bud because there too negligent and too busy with the routine life to let such questions even cross their minds. This group will never find the answers since there is no question for them to look for its answer. The second group includes people who have a healthy nature and welcome such questions. These people behave in two different ways: some who have a healthy mindset find the answers, while some others fail to find the right answer since they are captured by the bandits of thought.

Normalization of Qur'ān is a sad and tragic story. By normalizing Qur'ān, the man fails to make benefit from it. For this person, Qur'ān is a book just like the other books. For him, everything contained in Qur'ān is normal, and there no amazing point in Qur'ān.

Rumi is one of the thinkers who has focuses on the normalization of Qur'ān. Using an allegorical story about a cow and a lion, Rumi considers a man negligent of the presence and glory of Qur'ān as a peasant who is sitting by a lion and petting in comfort and ease, thinking it is a cow. In these verses of his poem, Rumi refers to the verses of Qur'ān, including the Surah al-Ḥashr, Verse 21. In this verse, the Almighty God says: "Had We sent down this Qur'ān upon a mountain, you would have surely seen it humbled [and] go to pieces with the fear of Allah". The present study attempts to examine Rumi's allegory of the man negligent of Qur'ān, and to discuss the normalization of Qur'ān based on the religious foundation.

A number of researchers have already studied the allegory of the cow and the lion in Mathnawi. In his paper titled "Rumi's interpretation of the stories about animals", Ali Reza Nabilou (2008, pp. 270-239) analyzed more than 50 anecdotes of Mathnawi to statistically examine the animal allegories and interpretations used by Rumi Mathnawi. Jalil Moshayedi and Sasan Zand-e-Moqadam's (2012, pp. 133-185) paper titled "like a lion in the role of a cow" investigates the use of the allegory of the lion and the cow in Mathnawi. Moreover, Soheila Zoqi (2020, pp. 38-52) studies "an allegorical image of a cow in the ritual of Mehr (Mithraism) how it is reflected in Rumi's spiritual Mathnawi". To do so, she analyses the poems in which Rumi has used the example of the cow.

All the above studies have focused on the allegory of the lion and the cow. However, none has studied the given allegory from the viewpoint of the normalization of Qur'ān. Therefore, the present study which focuses on the normalization of Qur'ān can be considered as an innovation.

## 2. Theoretical Foundation

### 2.1 The Wonder of Qur'ān from The Point of View of Qur'ān

Describing the glory of Qur'ān, The Almighty God says *لَوْ أَنزَلْنَاهُ عَلَى جَبَلٍ لَّرَأَيْتَهُ خَاشِعًا* (Had We sent down this Qur'ān upon a mountain, you would have surely seen it humbled [and] go to pieces with the fear of Allah. We draw such comparisons for mankind, so that they may reflect) (Ḥashr: 21). Going to pieces means the disintegration of the earth

since its mountains are the backbones of the earth. The Almighty God describes the mountains as the anchorage of the earth (al-Nāzi‘āt: 32). If the mountains go to pieces, then the anchorage of the earth will be destroyed and, consequently, the ship will sink. In other words, if a mountain cannot bear Qur’ān, the earth won't definitely be able to bear it. The Almighty God talks about a precious Trust which the heavens and the earth could not bear: "إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ فَأَبَيْنَ أَنْ يَحْمِلْنَهَا وَأَشْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا وَحَمَلَهَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ ظَلُومًا جَهُولًا" (Indeed We presented the Trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to bear it, and were apprehensive of it, but man undertook it. Indeed, he is most unfair and senseless) (al-Aḥzāb: 72).

What does God mean by Trust? There are various opinions. However, whatever is mentioned, Qur’ān is one of the examples of it. Hence, Qur’ān can be considered one of the obvious examples of the Trust (Makerim Shirazi, 1996, pp. 25, 38).

The fact that the heavens and the earth and the mountains refused to bear it was not out of their arrogance. Therefore, they should not be condemned. Qur’ān considers Satan's disobedience to "Prostrate before Adam" as an act of arrogance and condemns him (al-Baqarah: 34), whereas appreciating the obedience of the heavens and the earth (Fuṣṣilat: 11). Rebelling out of arrogance means one intentionally refuses to follow God's command, while he is able to do that. In contrast, if one refuses to do God's command because he is apprehensive about not being able to fulfill that, he should not reprehend. Therefore, the heavens and the earth are not able to bear the Divine Trust, i.e. Qur’ān. According to the Surah al-Hashr, verse 21, if Qur’ān was sent down upon a mountain, it would surely go to pieces.

Now let's see why Qur’ān is such that a mountain cannot bear it and what is in Qur’ān that breaks mountains into pieces. It is because Qur’ān is the manifestation of God. Imam Ali (AS) states about the manifestation of God in Qur’ān "فَتَجَلَّى لَهُمْ سُبْحَانَهُ فِي كِتَابِهِ مِنْ غَيْرِ أَنْ يَكُونُوا رَأَوْهُ بِمَا أَرَاهُمْ مِنْ قُدْرَتِهِ وَخَوْفِهِمْ مِنْ سَطْوَتِهِ" (God has manifested Himself for the men in Qur’ān without them seeing Him since He has exhibited His power and has glorified His glory in the hearts) (Sayyid Razi, 1993, p. 204). Imam Sadiq (As) also has referred to the same points in one of his hadiths (Koleini, 1987, V. 8, p. 387).

Now that Qur’ān is the manifestation of God, so its' descent on the mountains make them go to pieces. Qur’ān describes how Lord disclosed Himself to the mountain as follows:

وَلَمَّا جَاءَ مُوسَى لِمِيقَاتِنَا وَكَلَّمَهُ رَبُّهُ قَالَ رَبِّ أَرْنِيْ اَنْظُرْ اِلَيْكَ قَالَ لَنْ نَرَانِيْ وَلَكِنْ اَنْظُرْ اِلَى الْجَبَلِ فَاِنْ اسْتَقَرَّ مَكَانَهُ فَسَوْفَ نَرَانِيْ فَلَمَّا تَجَلَّى رَبُّهُ لِلْجَبَلِ جَعَلَهُ دَكًا وَخَرَّ مُوسَى صَعِقًا فَلَمَّا اَفَاقَ قَالَ سُبْحَانَكَ تُبْتُ اِلَيْكَ وَ اَنَا اَوَّلُ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ

When Moses arrived at Our tryst and his Lord spoke to him, he said, 'My Lord, show [Yourself] to me, that I may look at You!' He said, 'You shall not see Me. But look at the mountain: if it abides in its place, then you will see Me.' So when his Lord disclosed Himself to the mountain, He levelled it, and Moses fell down swooning. And when he recovered, he said, 'Immaculate are You! I turn to You in penitence, and I am the first of the faithful (al-A‘rāf:143).

Putting him following two premises together, we can draw a logical conclusion:

Premise 1: Qur’ān is the manifestation of God.

Premise 2: if God discloses Himself to the mountain, He will level it.

Conclusion: if Qur’ān is sent down upon a mountain, it will go to pieces.

According to the above, the continuity and the connection of the Islamic teachings become obvious. The first premise refers to a hadith from Imam Ali (As), and the latter one is based on al-A‘rāf, 143. The logical conclusion of the two premises refers to al-Hashr, 21.

Accordingly, Qur’ān is the manifestation of God. If God Manifests Himself on a mountain, it will not be able to bear that.

This is supported in some other hadiths, as well. Zurāra once asked Imam Sadiq (As): "what was the intoxication and anesthesia which the holy Prophet experienced during the Revelation?" Imam replied: "when God disclosed Himself directly to His messenger- i.e. without there being any intermediate angle between God and His messenger- the holy Prophet could not bear it and became intoxicated" (Saduq, 2020, p. 115). Moreover, Ibn Mas'ud states:

One day, I entered the mosque. The Messenger of God was alone. He asked me to recite Qur'ān. I opened Qur'ān and started reciting until I reached the following verse: "فَكَيْفَ إِذَا جِئْنَا مِنْ كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ بِشَهِيدٍ وَجِئْنَا بِكَ عَلَىٰ هَٰؤُلَاءِ شَهِيدًا" (So how shall it be, when We bring from every nation a witness and We bring you as a witness to them?) (al-Nisā': 41). I saw his eyes fill with tears. Then, the holy Prophet said: "that's enough, don't recite anymore" (Majlesi, 1983, pp. 16, 294).

The fact that Qur'ān is not effective on some people is because they are not interested in it. For example, imagine a house catches fire, and two people get informed about it: a firefighter and the owner of the house. Their reaction to this will not be the same. The firefighter will calmly try to put out the fire as soon as possible to prevent further damage. On the other hand, the owner will get so anxious that he may have a stroke and even die. Why? It is not because they have different knowledge and awareness since both know that fire is harmful and devastating, rather it is the love and attachment that determine their reactions. The firefighter is not attached to the house, so he does his duty indifferently, whereas the owner is attached to his house and, seeing the fire, gets worried to death. What affects the man is his strong attachment and love. If he is attached, he will suffer, and if he is not attached, he will not care. Similarly, Imam Ali (As) states: "if a mountain loves me, it will go to pieces as a result of its excessive affection to me" (Sayyid Razi, 1993, p. 288).

## 2.2 The Wonder of Qur'ān from the Point of View of Hadiths

The hadiths have also referred to the wonders of Qur'ān. In a hadith from the holy Prophet, it is narrated that the wonders of Qur'ān are boundless and will never be obsolete (Koleini, 1987, V. 2, p. 599).

Imam Sadiq (AS) stated: "Indeed, the Most Powerful has sent you a Book which contains the news of you, those had come before you, and those will come after you. It also holds the news of the heavens and the earth. If someone came to you and gave such news, you would certainly get amazed" (Koleini, 1987, V. 2, p. 601).

Quoting Imam Baqir (As), Jaber states: "on the Day of Judgment, Qur'ān will appear in the form of a man with a beautiful face and pass by the Muslims. They will say: "this is one of us", but it will pass them and reaches the Prophets. The Prophets will also say "this is one of us", but it will pass them, as well and reach the arch-angles. The angles will say this is one of us. However, it will pass them, too, and reaches the threshold of God, and will address God: "O Lord! The son of so-and-so has spent the hot days thirstily, and has stayed up during the night just for me, while the son of so-and-so has experienced neither thirst nor staying up". So The Almighty God will state: "take them to Paradise and put them in their right place". Qur'ān will stand up and they follow it. Qur'ān will say to the believers: "recite Qur'ān to get a promotion". Imam Baqir (As) adds: "thus, each of the believers will recite Qur'ān and get promoted so that will reach the position assigned for him by God" (Koleini, 1987, V. 2, p. 601).

## 3. Qur'ān in Mathnawi

The profound impact of holy Qur'ān on the Persian writers' and poets' words is undeniable. Reviewing the writings and poems of the Persian poets, as well as the explicit acknowledgment of some of the excellent poets confirms this claim (Halabi, 1994, p. 11; Mu'azeni, 1994, 15). Rumi is the prime example of the poets influenced deeply by Qur'ān. It is confirmed by the tens and even hundreds of

Quranic themes that have been depicted in Mathnawi esthetically (Taqi zade Chari & Ja'fari Kamangir, 2020, p. 22).

There are ample Qur'ānic verses and Hadiths in Mathnawi, which have been used implicitly and in the form of allusion. Countless researchers have focused on Rumi's special viewpoint on the Qur'ānic verses, and have confirmed that he had been affected by Qur'ān. One of the commentators of Mathnawi who has emphasized this is Haj Mulla Hadi Sabzewari. In his *Sharh-e Mathnawi Ma'nawi*, Sabzewari considers Mathnawi as the poetic Qur'ān and states that some of the verses of Mathnawi have been adapted from Qur'ān (Sabzewari, 1996, pp. 1, 9). The effect of Islamic teachings on Mathnawi has been discussed in the works of many recent scholars, including *Sirr-e Ney* (Secret of the Reed) (Zarrinkoub, 1986), *Bahr Dar Kouzeh* (Sea in a Jug) (Zarrinkoub, 1988), *Ma'khaz-e Qasas wa Tamthilat-e Mathnawi* (A Source of the Stories and Allegories of Mathnawi) (Frouzan Far, 1968), and Qur'ān and Mathnawi (Khoramshahi, 2017).

Rumi's grandfather and father were preachers. Trained by them, he was completely familiar with and fond of the holy Qur'ān. In fact, all the preachers were so familiar with the text of Qur'ān and Qur'ānic sciences such as commentary and Hadith, that could improvise about the verses which were recited on the pulpit. In Mathnawi, Rumi quotes about 2000 Qur'ānic verses either directly, using the exact text, or indirectly, via translation. In some cases, Rumi uses some words from the Qur'ān text. However, this quotation is not a mere quotation in that he gives them new meanings and interpretations of the verses, which one cannot find anywhere in history. Rumi's affection for Qur'ān is amazing. He believes that Qur'ān is the words of God, which have been conveyed to us through revelation to the Prophet (PBUH).

Rumi presents specific interpretations for Qur'ān many of which have been mentioned in various works. Yet, some of his interpretations are his own.

Rumi sometimes quotes the verses directly without any manipulation. To include a verse in a poem, the poet must use a specific meter, i.e. Fa'elaton Fa'elaton Fa'elon. For example, "وزمّلک هم بایدم" (And I must escape even from (the state of) the angel: everything is perishing except His Face) (Rumi, 1995, V.2. pp. 222), "جستن ز جو/ کل شیء هالک الا وجهه" (Then I shall become non-existence: non-existence saith to me, (in tones loud) as an organ, Verily, unto Him) (Rumi, 1995, v. 2, p. 222). Moreover, there are some cases in which the verse does not fit the meter, so Rumi has to change some words or omit some parts of the verse. For example, "عاشق رنج است نادان تا ابد/" (the ignorant man is in love with pain unto everlasting/ arise and read (in the Qur'ān) I sear as far as (the words) in trouble) (Rumi, 1995, V. 2, p. 105). Rumi has used the Qur'ānic verses in different ways to both adorn his words with them and to explain his mystical views.

#### 4. Rumi's Commentary Style

Rumi believes that to interpret Qur'ān, one needs to understand Qur'ān from Qur'ān itself. In other words, his interpretation style is to interpret Qur'ān to Qur'ān. That is why he says "معنی قرآن ز قرآن" (ask the meaning of Qur'ān from the Qur'ān alone) (Rumi, 1995, v. 3, p. 200).

According to Rumi, Qur'ān is like a rope which can both take a person out of the darkness of a well and send him to the bottom of the well. Indeed, it depends on the intention of the person for referring to Qur'ān. Rumi says (1995, V. 2, p. 240):

مر رسن را نیست جُرمی ای عنود/ چون ترا سودای سربالا نبود

There is no fault in the rope, O perverse man. Inasmuch as you had no desire for (reaching) the top.

The desire for (reaching) the top means the intention of the person from referring to Qur'ān is to reach God. If a person recites Qur'ān to reach God, the Book will help him. Otherwise, he cannot use Qur'ān, rather will go deeper into the darkness and will be led astray.

Every written text- holy or unholy- is interpreted based on the reader's mentality and his personality type. Our understanding of the text is subject to our mentality, expectation and personality type, and ethical and intellectual orientation. This is in consistence with the hermeneutic theory called "*Death of the Author*". According to Qur'ān, "كُلٌّ يَعْمَلُ عَلَى شَاكِلَتِهِ" (Everyone acts according to his character.) (al-Isrā': 84). Rumi calls this mentality a "desire". If one desire's for (reaching) the top, he will go up from the bottom of the well with the help of Qur'ān. On the other hand, if he desires to go to the bottom of the well, he will reach the bottom of the well, even if he is at the top.

زان که از قرآن بسی گمراه شدند / زان رستن قومی درون چه شدند  
مَر رستن را نیست جرمی ای عنود / چون تو را سودای سربالا نبود

For many have been led astray by the Qur'ān/ by clinging to that rope a multitude have fallen into the well.

There is no fault in the rope, O perverse man. Inasmuch as you had no desire for (reaching) the top (1995, V. 2, p. 240).

Rumi has adapted this allegory from the following verses of Qur'ān: "يُضِلُّ بِهِ كَثِيرًا وَ يَهْدِي بِهِ كَثِيرًا وَمَا" (Thereby He leads many astray, and thereby He guides many; and He leads no one astray thereby except the transgressors) (al-Baqarah: 26); "و نُنَزِّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَ رَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَ لَا يَزِيدُ" (We send down in the Qur'ān that which is a cure and mercy for the faithful, and it increases the wrongdoers only in loss.) (al-Isrā': 82).

Accordingly, a general conclusion can be drawn: the interpretation of the content of the text, particularly holy texts, is subject to the reciter. The best books can turn into the worst ones by the evil people, whereas the good people can change the worst books into the best ones. Rumi (1995, V. 1, p. 99) says:

کاملی گر خاک گیرد، زر شود / ناقص از زر بُرد، خاکستر شود  
چون قبول حق بود آن مرد راست / دست او در کارها دست خداست  
دست ناقص دست شیطانست و دیو / ز آنک اندر دام تکلیفست و ربو  
جهل آید پیش او دانش شود / جهل شد علمی که در ناقص رود  
هر چه گیرد علّتی، علّت شود / کُفر گیرد کاملی، ملت شود

If a perfect man (saint) take earth, it becomes gold/ if an imperfect one has carried away gold, it becomes ashes.

Since that righteous man is accepted of God/ his hand in (all) things is the hand of God.

The hand of the imperfect man is the hand of Devil and demon/ because he is in the trap of imposition and guile.

If ignorance come to him (the perfect man)/ it becomes knowledge, (but) the knowledge that goes into the disbelieving man becomes ignorance.

Whatever an ill man takes becomes illness, (but) if a perfect man takes infidelity, it becomes religion.

If one desires to reach the top, the inner devil will also convert to Islam, and Yazid becomes a Bayazid:

دیو اگر عاشق شود هم گوی برد / جبرئیلی گشت و آن دیوی بُمرد  
اسلم الشیطان آنجا شد پدید / که یزیدی شد ز فضلش بایزید

(but) if the devil becomes a lover (of God). He has carried off the palm/ he has become a Gabriel and his devilish nature is dead.

"The Devil became a true believer" is made manifest on the occasion when by His (God's) grace a Yazid becomes a Bayazid (1995, V. 3, p. 481).

The second line of the poem refers to a hadith from the Prophet, saying: " شَيْطَانِي أَسْلَمَ بِيَدِي " (I made my Devil become a true believer by me) (Neishabouri, 1987, pp. 8, 139).

Rumi argues that to benefit from Qur'ān, one must first develop piety. This claim can be attributed to al-Baqarah. According to this surah, the pre-condition to use and get guidance from Qur'ān is to have Godwary (al-Baqarah: 2). Someone who is cruel or prejudices, misuses, and so forth will interpret the verses of Qur'ān based on his own goals and interests.

## 5. *Qur'ān in the allegory of the lion and the Cow*

As mentioned in the introduction, Rumi considers a Muslim who is ignorant of Qur'ān like a peasant who mistakenly takes a lion as a cow. The aim of the present paper is to study the given poem by Rumi.

### 5.1 The Peasant and the Lion Poem

The original text of the peasant and the Lion is presented below (Rumi, 1995, V. 1, p. 275):

«روستایی گاو در آخر بیست / شیر، گاوش خورد، بر جایش نشست  
روستایی شد در آخر سوي گاو / گاو را می‌جست شب آن کنج‌گاو  
دست می‌مالید بر اعضای شیر / پُشت و پهلوی، گاه بالا، گاه زیر  
گفت شیر: ار روشنی افزون شدی / زهره‌اش بدریدی و دل، خون شدی  
این چنین گستاخ ز آن می‌خاردم / کو در این شب، گاو می‌پنداردم  
حق همی گوید که: ای مغرورِ کور / نه ز نامم پاره پاره گشت طور  
که لو آنزلنا کتاباً لِلْجَبَلِ / لَا نَصَدَّعَ ثُمَّ انْقَطَعَ ثُمَّ ارْتَحَلَ»

### 5.2 Translation of the Poem

A peasant tied his cow in the stable. Ironically, a lion ate his cow and sat in its place. The peasant went into the stable to (see) the cow. Groping into corners, the man was seeking the cow at night. Taking the lion as his cow, he was rubbing his hand on the limbs of the lion, back and side, now above, now below. The lion said, "If the light were to become greater, his gall-bladder would burst and his heart would turn to blood [out of fear]. He is stroking me so rudely because in this (dark) night he thinks I'm the cow". The Almighty God says: "O the blind and the dupe, did not Tur (Sina) [mount] fall in pieces at my names? Had We sent down this Qur'ān upon a mountain, you would have surely seen it humbled [and] go to pieces with the fear of Allah".

### 5.3 Explanation of the Poem

Rumi explains the normalization of Qur'ān by Muslims using an allegorical story. In this story, Rumi refers to two verses of Qur'ān. First, al-A'raf, verse 143, in which the Almighty God states: " وَلَمَّا جَاءَ مُوسَىٰ لِمِيقَاتِنَا وَكَلَّمَهُ رَبُّهُ قَالَ رَبِّ أَرْنِي أَنظُرُ إِلَيْكَ قَالَ لَنْ نَرَاكَ وَلَكِنْ نُنْظِرُ إِلَى الْجَبَلِ فَإِنِ اسْتَقَرَّ مَكَانَهُ فَسَوْفَ تَرَانِي فَلَمَّا تَجَلَّىٰ رَبُّهُ لِلْجَبَلِ جَعَلَهُ دَكًّا وَخَرَّ مُوسَىٰ صَبَقًا فَلَمَّا آفَقَ قَالَ سُبْحَانَكَ تُبْتُ إِلَيْكَ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ " (When Moses arrived at Our tryst and his Lord spoke to him, he said, 'My Lord, show [Yourself] to me, that I may look at You!' He said, 'You shall not see Me. But look at the mountain: if it abides in its place, then you will see Me.' so when his Lord disclosed Himself to the mountain, He levelled it, and Moses fell down swooning. And when he

recovered, he said, 'Immaculate are You! I turn to You in penitence, and I am the first of the faithful). In Rumi's allegorical story, the lion says: "He is stroking me so rudely because in this (dark) night he thinks I'm the cow". Then, Rumi adds that similarly, God addresses the blind and dupe people, saying "did not Tur (Sina) [mount] fall in pieces at my names?"

Furthermore, Rumi refers to another verse of Qur'ān, i.e. Ḥashr, verse 21: "لَوْ أَنزَلْنَا هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ عَلَىٰ جَبَلٍ لَّرَأَيْنَاهُ خَائِبًا مُّتَصَدِّعًا مِنْ خَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ وَتِلْكَ الْأَمْثَالُ نَضْرِبُهَا لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ" (Had We sent down this Qur'ān upon a mountain, you would have surely seen it humbled [and] go to pieces with the fear of Allah. We draw such comparisons for mankind, so that they may reflect). Rumi presents a right interpretation for this verse and says since Qur'ān is the manifestation of the Divine name, if it is sent down upon a mountain, it will go to pieces.

## 6. *The Reason of the Normalization of Qur'ān from Rumi's Viewpoint*

According to Rumi, everyday life is the main reason distracting Muslims from Qur'ān. Using allegory, Rumi represents an ignorant person as a peasant whose everyday task is to take of his cow. He is so accustomed to it that there no new aspects in this for him. Similarly, for those who are unaware of the glory of Qur'ān, Qur'ān is a normal book, a book just like other books except for the fact that it is a holy book and that Muslims kiss it, seek for blessings from it, give it as a gift, and even write it in beautiful handwriting, and recite it eloquently. However, they never realize the glory of Qur'ān. Therefore, they go astray from the main purpose of revelation of Qur'ān, i.e., guiding mankind.

## 7. *Normalization of Qur'ān from the Viewpoint of Qur'ān*

In Qur'ānic literature, normalization is interpreted as oblivion. The oblivion of Qur'ān has been mentioned in al-Furqān, verse 30: "وَقَالَ الرَّسُولُ يَا رَبِّ إِنَّ قَوْمِي اتَّخَذُوا هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ مَهْجُورًا" on the Day of Judgment, the Prophet will complain: "O my Lord! Indeed, my people consigned this Qur'ān to oblivion". By oblivion, it is meant that the Muslim Nation does not seek to hear and understand Qur'ān (Ṭabrisī, 1994, pp. 7, 263). The verse shows that the Muslims had access to Qur'ān, but they had practically abandoned it because they did not understand it accurately and did not use it appropriately. Qur'ān has changed into a kind of ceremonial book. They recite it eloquently and broadcast it, use it in tiles of the mosques as architectural art. When moving to a new house, the first thing they take to the new house is Qur'ān. When seeing off passengers, they ask them to pass under Qur'ān in order to have a safe trip. When someone gets sick, they recite Qur'ān to ask God to heal him. They may also recite Qur'ān to get rewarded (Makarim Shirazi, 1996, V. 15, p. 77).

### 7.1 Types of Normalization of Qur'ān

#### 7.1.1 Normalization of reciting Qur'ān

Normalization of reciting Qur'ān can be explained in two parts: 1. Abandonment of recitation, 2. Failure to observe the recitation rituals.

Abandonment of recitation: people can access Qur'ān very easily. However, few people devote time to recite and understand it. Although Qur'ān and hadiths have emphasized recitation of Qur'ān, many people deprived themselves from it and its valuable effects on their lives. The holy Qur'ān says: "فَاقْرَأُوا مَا تيسَّرَ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ" (So recite as much of the Qur'ān as is feasible) (al-Muzzammil: 20).

Failure to observe the recitation rituals: in order to take full advantage of reciting Qur'ān and to order for the reciter to reach his goal from reciting Qur'ān, we must observe the ritual of recitation to the



best of our abilities. Imam Sadiq (AS) states that " the reciter of Qur'ān needs three things: a humble heart, a relaxed body and an empty place. If one's heart gets humble for God, the cursed Satan will escape from him" (Majlisi, 1983, V. 82, p. 43). There are many rituals in reciting Qur'ān. Some of the most important ones are as follows:

- a. To Respect and glorify: The holy Prophet states: After the Almighty God, Qur'ān is the most superior thing. Whoever respects and glorifies Qur'ān, it is as if he respects and glorifies God. Whoever disrespects Qur'ān, it is as though he has not respected God (Majlisi, 1983, V. 89, p. 19). The first condition to be at the presence of Qur'ān is to glorify it and to behave respectfully.
- b. To take refuge in God: to cite Qur'ān, one first must *take refuge in God* from Satan. The holy Qur'ān says: "فَإِذَا قَرَأْتَ الْقُرْآنَ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ" (When you recite the Qur'ān, seek the protection of Allah against the outcast Satan.) (al-Nahl: 98).
- c. To purify one's body and mind: benefiting from Qur'ān requires both inward and outward cleanness: purification mouth and tongue, asking God for forgiveness, and purification of the body and mind. Qur'ān is pure, so only the pure ones can take advantage of it: "لَا يَمَسُّهُ إِلَّا الْمُطَهَّرُونَ" (no one touches it except the pure ones) (al-Wāqī'ah: 79).
- d. To recite in a measured tone: Qur'ān must be recited slowly and with reflection: "وَرَتِّلِ الْقُرْآنَ تَرْتِيلًا" (and recite the Qur'ān in a measured tone.) (al-Muzzammil: 4).
- e. To contemplate Qur'ān: Qur'ān must be recited thoughtfully and with contemplation: "كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ" ([It is] a blessed Book that We have sent down to you, so that they may contemplate its signs) (Sād: 29).
- f. To give due attention: the reciter of Qur'ān should recite it as it ought to be recited: "الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ" (Those to whom We have given the Book follow it as it ought to be followed: they have faith in it) (al-Baqarah: 121). In this regard, Imam Sadiq (As) states: "one should read the verses carefully, understand its truths and follow its rules. In addition, he should be hopeful about its promises and be afraid of its threats. He also must take lessons from its stories, follow its commands and accept its advices (Deilami, 1992, pp. 1, 78)

Imam Ali (AS) describes the **pious** people, saying: "أَمَّا اللَّيْلُ فَصَافُونَ أَفْئَامَهُمْ تَالِينَ لِأَجْزَاءِ الْقُرْآنِ يُرْتَلُونَهَا" (but at night, they stay up late to recite the Book of God. they read it slowly and contemplate on it. While reciting, they make themselves sad and seek the alleviation of their pain from it. When they encounter a good news, they crave for it as if it is before their eyes. On the other hand, when they face a sign which holds a Divine threat, they listen to it attentively and think that they hear the cry and roar of the hell) (Sayyid Razi, 1993, p. 204).

### 7.1.2 Normalization of listening to Qur'ān

One of the bitter truths about Muslims is that they engage in conversation while Qur'ān is recited. While the Almighty God has forbidden any speaking during the recitation of Qur'ān: "وَإِذَا قُرِئَ الْقُرْآنُ فَاسْتَمِعُوا لَهُ وَأَنْصِتُوا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ" (When the Qur'ān is recited, listen to it and be silent, maybe you will receive [Allah's] mercy) (al-A'rāf: 204). The holy Prophet of Islam (PBUH) states: "the listener of Qur'ān will receive no evil, and the reciters of Qur'ān will not suffer in the hereafter. Listening to one verse of Qur'ān is much better than having a golden mountain" (Majlisi, 1983, V. 89, p. 19).

### 7.1.3 Normalization of contemplating on Qur'ān

The true believers and the real pious people recite Qur'ān with contemplation and enjoy the Divine colorful mercies. Sine Qur'ān is the Book of contemplation, mere recitation of it without paying attention to its meanings will not lead one to the goal of Qur'ān. Qur'ān has principally revealed for us to reflect on its signs: "كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَارَكٌ لِيَدَّبَّرُوا آيَاتِهِ" ([It is] a blessed Book that We have sent down to you, so that they may contemplate its signs) (Sād: 29).

Qur'ān severely rebukes those who do not reflect on the Divine signs, saying: "أَفَلَا يَتَذَكَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ أَمْ عَلَى قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَا" (Do they not contemplate the Qur'ān, or are there locks on their hearts?) (Muḥammad: 24).

The excessive attention to the words and phrases of Qur'ān, attempting to finish reading its Surahs, no to seek to understand the teachings of Qur'ān, and the scientific and educational centers' reluctance to promote the culture of contemplation are some of the obvious examples of the normalization of contemplating on Qur'ān.

### 7.1.4 Normalization in interpreting Qur'ān

Doing everything requires knowing it well. Without knowledge, one either cannot be able to do it or will do it blindly. Qur'ān is the Book of life and practice. Before acting on Qur'ān, one must know it well. By interpreting Qur'ān, we can increase our knowledge about the Divine signs. However, Muslims' approach to the interpretation of Qur'ān is not very satisfactory. Looking at the modern scientific community, it becomes clear that although there are many interpretation courses in different scientific and religious centers, they are not sufficient to void the normalization in interpreting Qur'ān.

### 7.1.5 Normalization in acting on Qur'ān

Learning how to recite Qur'ān, contemplating on it, knowing the Divine teachings of Qur'ān *are a prelude to act on Qur'ān*. If Qur'ān is not manifested in one's- or society's as a whole- action, speech, and personality, it will never get out of normality. Acting on Qur'ān will affect people and, thus, will elevate *societies*.

Today, by investigating the people's lives in Islamic societies, we should find out the aspects of Muslims' lives in which Qur'ān plays an active role. Does Qur'ān play an active role in Islamic governments? Economic systems? People's interactions? Schools and universities? Foreign policies and interactions with other governments? The division of national wealth among different classes of people? The leaders' and managers' manner? All the classes of the society? The couples' relationship? Clothing styles and eating habits? Home? Bank deposits and savings? Public movements and social gatherings? It seems that only Mosques, praying rooms, and a small part of the media are promoting Qur'ān! Unfortunately, today, people just put Qur'ān on the niches of their houses, give it to others as a gift, and recite it on the cemeteries to ask God to forgive the dead! Hopefully, the Muslim nations will put into the practice the following statement from Imam Ali (As): "وَاللَّهُ اللَّهُ فِي الْقُرْآنِ لَا يَسْفِكُكُمْ بِالْعَمَلِ بِهِ غَيْرُكُمْ" (fear God. fear God about Qur'ān, lest others excel you in acting on Qur'ān) ((Sayyid Razi, 1993, p. 222).

## 7.2 The Signs and Effects of Normalization of the Holy Qur'ān

Normalization of Qur'ān in society does not mean that people do not recite it. Rather, it means Qur'ān is not the driving force of Islamic society. The most important factor leading to the normalization of Qur'ān is that there seems God and religion have no role in people's lives, a bitter truth which Imam Hussain (AS) puts it rightly, the bitter truth is that in the lives of most people, religion plays no role. They talk about religion as much as they think it is necessary for their lives. However, when they face the Divine test, only a few remain faithful (Irbili, 2003, pp. 2, 32)

Man has forgotten who he is and why he has come to this world; he reckons that he is the main purpose of the creation of this world and that he must achieve whatever he wishes. However, the religious

## 8. *The Relationship Between Self-Ignorance and the Normalization of Qur'ān*

On the other hand, the need for Qur'ān is the need for a Prophet and Divine authority. Imam Sadiq (As) said to Zurāra: " if you are alive at the time of the twelfth Imam's Caliphate, recite this prayer: اللَّهُمَّ عَرِّفْنِي نَفْسَكَ، فَإِنَّكَ إِنْ لَمْ تُعَرِّفْنِي رَسُولَكَ، فَإِنَّكَ إِنْ لَمْ تُعَرِّفْنِي رَسُولَكَ، لَمْ أَعْرِفْ حُجَّتَكَ؛ اللَّهُمَّ عَرِّفْنِي نَفْسَكَ، لَمْ أَعْرِفْ نَبِيِّكَ؛ اللَّهُمَّ عَرِّفْنِي رَسُولَكَ، فَإِنَّكَ إِنْ لَمْ تُعَرِّفْنِي رَسُولَكَ، فَإِنَّكَ إِنْ لَمْ تُعَرِّفْنِي حُجَّتَكَ، ضَلَلْتُ عَنْ دِينِي " (O Lord! Let me know You since if I do not know You, I will not know Your Prophet. O Lord! Help me know Your Prophet since if I do not know Your prophet, I will not know Your Divine authority. O Lord! Help me know Your Divine authority since if do not know Your Divine authority, I will go astray (Koleini, 1987, V. 1, p. 337).

Not only the need for Qur'ān but also the need for God is related to self-knowledge. It can definitely be said that self-ignorance makes the person to feel he does not need Qur'ān and God.

One who is self-sufficient or feels he is self-sufficient will not act lawfully and cautiously in that area. He will behave recklessly because he is not afraid of anyone or anything. He will be arrogant, and will not obey anyone. However, if the person sees himself as poor and in need, he will behave accordingly. He will be lawful, cautious, and obedient. According to Qur'ān, those who rebel against God are the ones who consider themselves self-sufficient: "إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لِرَبِّهِ لَكَنُفٍ \* أَن رَّاهُ اسْتَعْزَىٰ" (Indeed man becomes rebellious, when he considers himself without need) (al-'Alaq: 6-7).

Someone who feels he is wealthy, even if he is not so, behaves just like wealthy people. Feeling wealthy encourages the person to act in a certain way, just as false self-confidence does so. According to Qur'ān, mankind is a being who stands in need of God, and God is the All-sufficient (Fāṭir: 15), but many people know feel this need. When a child reaches adulthood and feels powerful and knowledgeable, he does not obey his parents anymore. God states: "وَذَرْنِي وَالْمُكَذِّبِينَ أُولَىٰ النُّعْمَةِ" (Leave Me [to deal] with the deniers, the opulent.) (al-Muzzammil: 11). Qur'ān says a group of the opulent will deny God and will not serve Him since being wealthy or feeling wealthy makes them forget themselves and not see the truth of their own poverty. Thus, instead of seeing their real identity, they falsely feel that are wealthy and self-sufficient, instead of acknowledging Islam and Sharia', they deny them, and instead of obeying God, they start to rebel. This disease can only be treated by emphasizing and pointing to their real identity, which is their poverty. These people should be shown that what makes them feel self-sufficient and wealthy is just false wealth. Rather what makes him wealthy is the Divine wealth. In other words, if mankind realizes that whatever he has belongs to God - "وَمَا بِكُمْ مِنْ نِعْمَةٍ فَمِنَ اللَّهِ" - Whatever blessing you have is from Allah) (al-Nahl: 53)- he will serve God and be pious.

Qur'ān presents two completely different lines of thought. From the monotheistic perspective, a monotheist person believes that whatever he has is by the grace of his Lord (al-Naml: 40). However, from non-monotheistic perspective, the polytheist and infidel person does not consider his possessions a grace of the Lord and considers himself as the only cause. Qarun said: "إِنَّمَا أُوتِيتُهُ عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ عِنْدِي" (I have indeed been given [all] this because of the knowledge that I have) (al-Qaṣaṣ: 78).

## Conclusion

Rumi is one of the most prominent Persian poets. He refers to Qur'ānic verses to a large extent and quotes them in various ways, either directly or indirectly. One of the verses which are quoted in Mathnawi is the Surah al-Ḥaṣhr, verse 21. Describing the glory of Qur'ān, God says if he had sent Qur'ān upon a mountain, it would go to humbled and go to pieces. To interpret this verse, Rumi has aptly created a new allegory. The story is about a peasant who takes a lion as his cow. The peasant is a symbol of an ignorant person who does not know the value of Qur'ān and considers it like any other book and degrades its dignity.

According to this allegorical poem of Rumi, it can be said that Rumi believes everyday life is the main factor leading to this attitude. Rumi first refers to al-A'rāf: 143 and the story in which Moses asks God to show Himself to him. In this verse, the Almighty God addresses Moses, saying: "You shall not see Me. You cannot bear seeing my manifestation upon a mountain, how could you bear to see me?" In this verse, it is emphasized that when God disclosed Himself to a mountain, it went to pieces. Rumi goes on to refer to Al-Ḥaṣhr, verse 21, and makes a logical link between the two verses. Based on the two verses, it can be concluded that what made the mountain go to pieces is not Qur'ān itself. Rather since Qur'ān is the manifestation of God, it caused the mountain to collapse.

One of the main findings of the present study is Rumi's perfect knowledge about the Islamic teachings and his eloquent ideas. The fact that Qur'ān is the manifestation of God is pointed out in some

narrative teachings such as Imam Ali's (As) hadiths. Both the above verses and Rumi's allegorical story show that the oblivion of Qur'ān is not because Muslims do not have access to Qur'ān. In fact, Qur'ān is constantly at their disposal, but the problem is that they do not use it appropriately and do not have a deep and meaningful relationship with it.

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